

Florida Freedom Initiative (FFI)



The Florida Freedom Initiative (FFI) is a statewide demonstration being conducted by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (formerly the Florida Department of Children and Families). It focuses on Medicaid beneficiaries with developmental disabilities who use long-term care supports and services. Its goals are to improve the delivery of those supports and services and to promote self-sufficiency.

In conjunction with the FFI, Social Security is conducting a demonstration that consists of waiving certain SSI program rules for FFI participants. The purpose of the Social Security demonstration, called Work Incentives for Participants in the Florida Freedom Initiative, is to enable SSI beneficiaries to take part in the FFI and to test whether the waivers promote work and asset building.

How does it work?

The FFI will build on Florida's successful Cash and Counseling and Consumer Directed Care Plus (CDC+) demonstrations. Instead of agency-furnished services, participants will receive a cash allowance, set aside in a restricted account. Within parameters agreed upon in advance, they will be able to direct disbursements from the account to pay for long-term supports and services they and their support circle consider necessary, from vendors and providers of their choosing.

In addition, the FFI will emphasize the generation of personal income through work, especially through very small businesses called micro-enterprises. Participants and their support circles will receive training in micro-enterprise development.

The modified SSI program rules will provide additional incentives to work and save and will enable SSI beneficiaries to participate in the demonstration without jeopardizing benefits.

SSA's Expectations

SSA will (a) support the efforts of CMS, the State of Florida, and other partners to conduct the FFI; (b) further test the appropriateness of current SSI rules requiring that cash received for the purchase of medical or social services be counted as a resource if retained for more than one calendar month after the month of receipt; (c) empower participants to use their earnings to save toward purchasing a home, capitalizing a small business or micro-enterprise, attending college, or other approved purpose; e.g., the purchase of assistive technology or transportation; and (d) permit a determination of whether the combination of altered policies and procedures used for the FFI can generate SSI and/or Medicaid program savings by more effectively enabling participants to maximize their self-sufficiency.

For More Information

If you have questions about FFI, please contact us at ssa.demonstrations@ssa.gov

